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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09OTTAWA64, SCENESETTER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO OTTAWA

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09OTTAWA64**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09OTTAWA64	2009-01-22 16:35	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Ottawa

Appears in these articles:

[nytimes.com](#)

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OO RUEHGA RUEHHA RUEHMT RUEHQU RUEHVC  
DE RUEHOT #0064/01 0221635  
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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
TO RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUCNCAN/ALL CANADIAN POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9010

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 000064

SIPDIS

FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA FROM CHARGE D'AFFAIRES BREESE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/22/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [MARR](#) [SENV](#) [AF](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR THE PRESIDENT'S TRIP TO OTTAWA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Terry A. Breese, reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Mr. President, Mission Canada warmly welcomes you and the First Lady to Ottawa. We and Canadians alike are thrilled that your first foreign trip as President will be to Canada, which Canadians claim as a long-standing tradition reflecting the vital importance of this bilateral

relationship between two democratic neighbors.

#### SOME HOME TRUTHS

12. (C) Your enormous popularity among Canadians (an 81 pct approval rating) is to Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper both a blessing -- because he can for the first time since taking office in 2006 gain politically from public and policy association with the U.S. President -- and a curse -- because no Canadian politician of any stripe is nearly as popular, respected, or inspiring as you are to Canadian voters, a genuine factor in the historically low turnout in the October 2008 Canadian federal election. Many Canadians, especially university students, volunteered on your campaign, and busloads traveled to Washington for your inauguration.

13. (C) Your decision to make Ottawa your first foreign destination as President will do much to diminish -- temporarily, at least -- Canada's habitual inferiority complex vis-a-vis the U.S. and its chronic but accurate complaint that the U.S. pays far less attention to Canada than Canada does to us.

14. (C) The minority status in Parliament of Harper's Conservative Party means that it and all other parties now remain in almost permanent campaign mode; there have been three successive minority governments (one Liberal, two Conservative). The bottom line questions remain when the government will fall and on what issue. Your trip will help to ensure that the government will survive an early February vote of confidence on the federal budget, in which Canada will post its first deficit in more than a decade as it provides a stimulus package of \$30-40 billion.

15. (C) The U.S. and Canada enjoy the world's largest trading relationship, with more than \$1.5 billion in two-way trade crossing the border each day, including 77 pct of all Canadian exports. With the border central to Canada's economic well being, Canadians chafe about what they see as a "thickening of the border" caused by U.S. actions to strengthen homeland security since 9/11. Canadians claim that these measures have driven up business costs and delayed border crossers. The business and trade communities in the U.S. and Canada both believe that the "balance" between trade and security has been tilted too far toward security, and are hopeful that your administration will tilt that balance back. Canada may argue for a new mechanism (separate from the trilateral Security and Prosperity Partnership) to address bilateral concerns.

16. (C) Canadians wish that more Americans would recognize that Canada is the largest source of imported energy for the U.S. (including for both oil and natural gas), although there is also keen sensitivity over the higher environmental footprint of oil from western Canada's oil sands and concern about the implications for Canada of your energetic calls to develop renewable energies and reduce our reliance on imported oil. Canada is also rich in hydroelectric power, has similar objectives for developing renewables, and is working strenuously to improve the environmental impact of production from the oil sands and to expand its own wind production from the oil sands and to expand its own wind power capacity.

17. (C) Given the high integration of our two economies, Canada will hope for a truly North American discussion of economic stimulus, job creation, and sectoral support, as in coordinated bilateral measures on the auto sector (for which Canada promised a \$3.4 billion assistance plan -- 20 pct of what the U.S. offered, matching a pledge that PM Harper made to then-President Bush in December) and in the G-20 commitments on financial sector regulation. We should ensure that both nations continue to design complementary packages to revive our economies.

18. (C) Although the climate change issue has largely been the province of the official opposition Liberal Party, the

Conservative government now seeks to set in place measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advocates a coordinated policy with the U.S. on expanded efforts to protect our shared environment. They hope and expect this will be a central theme of your visit.

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¶9. (C) Arctic sovereignty is a motherhood-and-apple-pie issue for Canadians of all political persuasions, and they are deeply suspicious of assertions by the U.S. (and most other concerned nations) that the Northwest Passage is a strait for international navigation, not Canada's territorial sea. The new Arctic policy issued at the end of the Bush Administration, which reasserted our views on the Northwest Passage and emphasized cooperation among Arctic nations, has re-ignited these suspicions.

¶10. (C) Canada declined to join the U.S. in the invasion of Iraq and instead concentrated its global counterterrorism efforts on Afghanistan, including 2500 troops in Kandahar Province and its largest bilateral donor program worldwide. With the highest casualty rate among NATO partners and only about 65,000 Canadian Forces overall, there is virtually zero willingness across the Canadian political spectrum to extend the current Parliamentary mandate for these forces in Afghanistan beyond 2011, but Canada could offer up significant new funding to strengthen the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police. Much will depend upon convincing Canada that its continued contributions to the Afghanistan effort are a critical component of your strategy for success in Afghanistan.

¶11. (C) No matter which political party forms the Canadian government during your Administration, Canada will remain one of our staunchest and most like-minded of allies, our largest trading and energy partner, and our most reliable neighbor and friend.

#### KEY THEMES

¶12. (SBU) In your public remarks and media availability, these points would be most useful from Mission Canada's perspective:

- Canada is a true friend, trusted ally, valued trading partner, and democratic model for the world;
- around the world, the U.S. and Canada are working together to defeat terrorism, promote economic development through trade and investment, prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and advance the cause of human freedom and dignity;
- Canada and the U.S. are blessed to share the beauties and riches of North America, and will strive individually and jointly to protect and preserve its environment, while ensuring that our nations and the world benefit from its extensive natural and human resources;
- our highly integrated economies are now facing enormous challenges, but with our traditional resilience, creativity, sacrifice, and cooperation, our two countries will emerge from this crisis stronger than ever;
- while we share the prosperity that comes with the world's largest bilateral trade relationship, we also share the threats to that prosperity from international terrorism;
- 21st century technology can help ensure ever more safe and efficient transit of goods and people across this longest undefended border in the world, and we need to work together more fully to understand each other's security and trade needs and to build a shared vision for the security of our two nations from new threats while investing in technology and infrastructure that can secure, support, and expand the benefits of our trade;
- the U.S. and Canada maintain extensive cooperation in the Arctic. The U.S. views the Northwest Passage as a strait used for international navigation -- not Canada's territorial sea -- but does not dispute Canada's sovereignty over its Arctic islands;

-- Canada has paid a disproportionately high price in human  
Q-- Canada has paid a disproportionately high price in human  
life to help the people of Afghanistan emerge from their dark  
era under the Taliban, and the U.S. salutes these Canadian  
contributions to the building of a democratic and successful  
society in that troubled land and counts on continued  
Canadian cooperation to achieve this goal;  
-- U.S. Presidents and Canadian Prime Ministers come and go,  
but our shared values and aspirations will continue to  
underpin a robust, mutually respectful, and hugely successful  
friendship and partnership that benefits not only our two  
peoples but the world.

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BREESE